

FALL 2010

# CIRCA

Newsletter of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life



Celebrating  
10 Years

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worship in  
*minyan* of  
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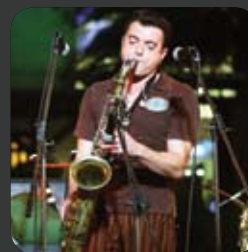
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## Talking via technology

The ISJL turns to social media to exchange ideas,  
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## A time for reflection, action



Message from  
ISJL Board Chair  
Rayman L. Solomon

Happy 5771! Many congregations have a tradition preceding the Kol Nidre service on Yom Kippur. The congregational President gives a report to what is the largest group of worshipers of the year. Since the ISJL seeks to make our 13-state region a virtual congregation, let me take this opportunity to provide a similar update.

This year, the Institute begins its second decade. Our Education Department remains our largest component and continues to provide important services to religious schools. The department has achieved national prominence for its Education Curriculum and innovative delivery system, but it is the combination of the two that makes it so remarkable. The Curriculum allows us to offer the children in 72 congregations in disparate towns and cities throughout the South the opportunity to develop a common base of Jewish knowledge. Most of these congregations have no professional Jewish educators. The ISJL's Education Fellows provide resources for planning and implementing weekly lessons. Each congregation receives three Fellow visits per year. The Fellows lead Shabbat services, work with the children and teachers and offer adult education.

Every June, representatives of each partner school gather in Jackson, MS, for the "Go and Teach" Education Conference. ISJL

staff and guest master educators present sessions on curricular topics and teaching issues. Social occasions and meals provide opportunities to informally share ideas and information. Along with two other board members, Minette Brown and Gail Goldberg, I attended this year's meeting. You can read a more detailed report of the meeting on page 8, but I am certain I speak for the three of us in saying that the vitality and professionalism of the entire staff was amazing, as was the genuine appreciation for the program expressed by the participants.

The Institute's other departments also are thriving. The highlight of our museum and cultural programming this year was the four-month tour by Israeli multi-instrumentalist Amir Gwirtzman. The ISJL Board attended his lively and highly entertaining Nashville concert. The Rabbinical Department continues to provide pastoral care, educational opportunities and spiritual leadership to small congregations throughout our region, as well as offering insights into the weekly Torah portion through the online Taste of Torah. The History Department has conducted more than 40 hours of oral history interviews this year as it adds community histories to the online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities. Our newest department, Community Engagement, is launching a school

peer mediation initiative this year and continues to explore other opportunities for collaboration.

It also is traditional in many synagogues for the President to make a Kol Nidre appeal for contributions. Financially, the past year has been difficult for all types of Jewish organizations. The Institute is no exception. Our Board has been committed to maintaining the current level of services, which required us to use reserves. Our fundraising has had some notable successes, such as a major gift from The Gottesman Fund. We are especially proud of this gift, as the donors had no previous connection to our region, but chose to invest in our innovative Jewish educational programming. We also received a new strategic gift from the Goldring and Woldenberg Family Foundations. For the fourth consecutive year, Slingshot has identified us as one of 50 most innovative Jewish organizations. However, if we are to build on our successes, we must ask each of you to make whatever investment you can afford to make in our future. In our second decade, we hope to increase the services we provide across our 13-state region and serve our virtual congregation with even more distinction.

*L' Shanah Tovah and Shalom y'all,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Solomon".

## I turn directly to you



Message from  
ISJL President  
Macy B. Hart

With this article come my personal greetings and message about the future of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. I trust you have had a meaningful and optimistic holiday season. We at the ISJL continue our planning for the months and even years ahead as we embrace this new year of growth and program opportunities. The ISJL sprang out of nowhere. This year we are celebrating our 10th anniversary of providing vital, innovative services to the Jewish community. Join me and you in wishing us all a Happy 10th!

One of the reasons the ISJL has rapidly grown to a staff of 26 professionals serving 13 states through six programming departments is that we identified a number of areas of concern and came up with some innovative solutions. We view our 13-state territory as "under the same umbrella." Our concept of shared programs and pooled resources makes our work as efficient as it is effective.

This message, as has been my practice of straightforwardness, is a solicitation for an investment in this grassroots organization. It is a direct ask for a tax-deductible donation. Please read on, and if so inclined, please respond.

No group or congregation belongs to the ISJL or pays ongoing dues. The ISJL depends completely on

contributions small and large from individuals, foundations, corporations, agencies and, yes, even lemonade stands and Sunday School *tzedakah* boxes. Our fundraising overhead is low. Gifts come from donors in 48 different states as well as internationally.

There are major-consensus challenges facing the Jewish community. The ISJL sets about to aggressively address them. We have demonstrated that there is a very effective way to function as a community rather than Jewish islands across

America, without any loss in theological philosophy or practice. Each year we continue to expand the opportunities and program offerings across the 13 states we directly serve.

The longer ISJL is in existence, the greater the impact on the Jewish community. Our approach serves Jews of all ages. Age-appropriate and directed programming is a key to the Jewish future.

For example, in our Education Department, we have emulated a secular-world concept by developing a curriculum that teaches a common *body of knowledge, in this case, Jewish knowledge*. We deliver it to congregations throughout our territory with a corps of Itinerant Education Fellows under the direction of master educators. This coming year will see approximately 3,500 children in 72 congregations across the Movements from early childhood through high school on the same

basic Jewish educational page, each in his or her own community, connected by the Curriculum and the Fellows. The ISJL has spent over \$3 million to create this educational system.

Our Board and our staff knew

going into this project that we were *deliberately looking* for a way to make Jewish education accessible to Jewish children regardless of the size of their community or congregation. We *deliberately addressed* the premises that 90 percent of children who receive a Jewish education do so at synagogue schools and

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Each year we  
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and program  
offerings across  
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that most of their teachers are volunteers with little or no training. The ISJL Education Department not only works with the children, but spends a great deal of time helping the teachers to be more effective in their classrooms. This is an issue long ignored in congregational education. These teachers share the same responsibility to produce Jewishly literate children as those communities who have the luxury of plentiful resources in staff and dollars.

*We deliberately confronted the fact that Jewish education in most communities was the last program to be funded. Educating Jewish children is a communal responsibility. Most congregations do not ask for financial support beyond the end user, the already over-extended young families. We urge congregations to ask "empty nesters," whether related to students or just friends, to support the religious schools in their own community even though they no longer have children who will directly benefit from that program. Meanwhile,*

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The longer ISJL is in existence, the greater the impact on the Jewish community.

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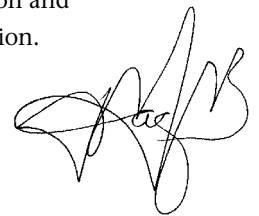
we also have sought and continue to seek major funding from philanthropists, foundations and other resources because we are committed to providing a high-quality Jewish education to all who want it, regardless of the size of their community.

The ISJL also sends its Itinerant Rabbi to congregations that do not have a full-time professional spiritual leader. In 2010, the Rabbinic Department has reached into 10 states for the first time. Our enrichment programs of arts and culture go to small and large communities. A recent example, sending a dynamic Israeli musician to seven states in a bit over four months, was quite an accomplishment for the ISJL – and the results were extraordinary. Our History Department has done excellent work in researching the life of the Southern Jewish community. Our other departments – Community Engagement and the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience – also are actively involved in producing dynamic programming for communities regardless of their size.

The economic downturn of the last three years has hit the ISJL just as it has other institutions and families. Though our Board and staff work together very carefully to ensure wise stewardship of the available resources, we must increase our number of donors and dollars raised.

I am now turning to you in a very direct way. If you are not already a donor, I am asking you to join us with a gift toward the support of the ISJL's groundbreaking work. Gifts from \$100 to \$5000 are very important to us, **especially now!** (One hundred percent of our Board is invested at a minimum of \$5,000 per year.) **Pages 16 and 17 of this CIRCA contain a list of opportunities that might appeal to those wanting to create a legacy gift.** As we receive few dollars from communal agencies, **your gift is significant.** If you are already a donor, I am asking that you increase your annual gift. The best place for us to turn is to our most committed and loyal friends.

Thanks so much for your consideration and hopeful action.



## Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Program launching with help of Tanenbaum Intern

By Malkie Schwartz, Director, Department of Community Engagement



This summer, the Department of Community Engagement was fortunate to have Mara Benenson join us as the first Jay Tanenbaum Social Justice Intern. Mara, a high-achieving student at the University of Texas, is dedicated to social justice issues. Her experience working at non-profit organizations in Austin, TX, her interest in education and her creativity contributed to the incredible work that she produced over the summer.

The Department of Community Engagement has focused on developing a Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Program that will be made available to schools and after-school programs, beginning in Jackson, MS. During the last academic year, we introduced a Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Program at Blackburn Middle School in Jackson. I worked with the staff to train a cohort of peer mediators who will

begin to help students solve their conflicts during this academic year. Mara was instrumental in formalizing the program and developing valuable resources, particularly the curriculum and workbook, which can benefit schools throughout the region.

“We look forward to full and complete implementation of this program at Blackburn Middle School,” said Blackburn Principal Marietta Carter. “We believe it will be instrumental in our holistic approach to the development of our students into well-rounded individuals who will be able to resolve conflicts in a positive manner.”

Bridget Harkins, a Blackburn teacher and coordinator for the Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Program, said: “As an educator, I am so excited about initiating this type of program in Blackburn Middle School. Life skills such as conflict resolution are so very important to the development of young people.”

The internship is named for Jay Tanenbaum, the ISJL Immediate Past Chairman, in tribute to his efforts toward establishing our Community Engagement Department and to recognize the legacy of the Tanenbaum family as an example of Southern Jews who actively supported their community. For four generations, the Tanenbaums recognized many needs in Dumas and throughout Arkansas, and stepped forward to address them. By creating or supporting initiatives in health care, education, combatting poverty and in working to end racial segregation, the value of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) was a part of the Tanenbaums' Jewish life. This Internship will help the ISJL address additional needs within our communities.

## Follow ISJL's activities – and participate – with new social media

Those of y'all who regularly read CIRCA, visit the ISJL website ([www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org)) or take in a presentation by our staff, please don't stop. In fact, continue reading. We have several new ways to help the public keep up with ISJL activities.

ISJL became an active user of social media this year with a regularly updated Facebook page, a busy but not overwhelming Twitter account and new videos posted on Youtube. "Facebook is a good way to reach the people we know," explains ISJL Education Fellow Emily Andes, who's in charge of ISJL's Facebook and Twitter accounts. "Twitter helps us reach people we don't know."

Facebook, for the uninitiated, is essentially a cyber bulletin board with ongoing updates and the capability for users to communicate with one another. Emily posts ISJL information on Facebook almost daily and monitors messages to ISJL.

Twitter enables users to broadcast, or tweet, and read brief messages. A Twitter follower can expect at least one ISJL tweet per day,

says Emily – usually a link to ISJL-related photos and videos, news and opinions on relevant topics such as Jewish camps, a fun topical reference such as the popularity of Jewish "Silly Bands" or retweets of others' quotable tweets.

"The Education Fellows have the option to tweet about their work," adds Emily, "and probably will as they travel to their education partner congregations."

Youtube is a website for sharing and watching videos. The most recent ISJL video covers this summer's Education Conference. The other ISJL video is an organizational overview created as a report to the Slingshot Foundation. Both were produced in-house by the versatile and talented ISJL staff.

To find the ISJL on Facebook, go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for **Institute of Southern Jewish Life**.

Among the posts you'll see are:

- A welcome to Education Fellow Alli Goldman from Asheville, NC.
- A link to an Alabama Public Television show about Amir Gwirtzman,

the Schusterman Visiting Artist from Israel who was hosted by the ISJL.

- A note seeking information on Confederate Jewish naval officer Raphael Semmes.

The Facebook page also features virtual discussions on Jewish education topics.

To follow ISJL on Twitter, go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and search for **ISJL**. Our tweets allow followers to:

- Keep up with the Education Fellows' travels – "The Fellows are invading Georgia this weekend! We'll be in Fayetteville, Augusta, and Atlanta. Look for updates from our adventures on the road... We passed Augusta National on the way to synagogue earlier & now Lauren Fredman is 'mastering' her teacher training."
- Monitor the Fellows' personal growth – "Big thought taken [by Mark Swick] from the @ISJL staff meeting: Genuine change is internal!"

- Share in a spiritual experience – "*Shavua Tov* [and a photo] from the shores of Lake Ponchatrain. A beautiful way to say goodbye to the Sabbath bride."

Social media offer new insights into ISJL. But they're more than a report. They're a dialogue. "I want our readers to be part of the conversation," says Emily. We invite you to join us.



## Motivated by the mission

### Janet Brueck



New ISJL Board member Janet Brueck grew up in Monroe, LA. She received a bachelor's degree in speech pathology from the University of Texas and a master's degree in clinical audiology at the University of Alabama. Janet is a Senior Sales Consultant in the Neurocare Division of CareFusion. She is an eight-time member of the President's Club of Nicolet Biomedical and was its first

Chairman's Club honoree in 2001.

She and her significant other, Jerry Lang, live in Memphis, where they are members of Temple Israel. Jerry serves on the temple's Board of Trustees.

Janet and Jerry have two very spoiled cats and are missing their recently deceased cocker spaniel, Bailey. The couple travels extensively

both domestically and throughout Europe. For the first time this year, they are planning to see Russia, including a stop at the Grand Choral Synagogue in St. Petersburg.

Janet explains that she became involved with the ISJL out of her "firm belief in the principles that guide the organization."

### Betsy Rosen



New ISJL Board member Betsy Rosen lives in Bentonville, AR, with her husband, Marc, and children, Joshua (10), and Alana (6). Betsy takes good care of her family and volunteers for her synagogue and general community. She and Marc were one of 11 founding families of Congregation Etz Chaim in Bentonville. She has served as the congregation's Religious School Director for two years after serving as congregation President. Betsy has volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and served as Vice President of the Walnut Farm Montessori School in Bentonville. She received the Tikkun Olam Award from

the Jewish Federation of Arkansas in 2005.

Betsy received a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree in social work from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois. She was employed as a social worker in the field of child welfare, specifically foster care and adoption.

"My involvement with the ISJL dates back six years," she says. "As Congregation Etz Chaim was founded, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life was the key Jewish organization that provided services to help us. From

the Education Curriculum and visits by the Education Fellows, Rabbis, Rabbinic Interns and Cantorial Interns, the ISJL's support helped shape who we are as a congregation today.

"Dr. Stuart Rockoff, Director of the ISJL History Department, has been instrumental in documenting our history. Additionally, the ISJL has put us in contact with other Southern congregations with which we have developed strong ties. I have seen firsthand how the ISJL has grown while keeping true to the mission of providing Jewish services to small congregations in the South. I am so pleased and feel privileged to be a part of the ISJL Board."



## Urgent response to cyber-bullying added to High School Curriculum

By Rachel Stern, Director, Education Department

It was just another day at the ISJL Education Department. People from across the South were calling with requests for programs and resources. One call, though, was different. The request was different. A rabbi was calling to discuss a disturbing situation. A child's modest Bat Mitzvah celebration had been mocked on Facebook by some of her contemporaries.

The incident left her family feeling devastated and betrayed by its own Jewish community during what should have been a time of joy and celebration. The rabbi was seeking a response that would not only explain the wrong, but also teach what Judaism says about the issue.

The Education Department discussed the situation. We were confident we could create a helpful lesson. As

three Education Fellows and I began to

work, we noticed countless headlines about harassment online, termed "cyber-bullying."

Some of these incidents ended in a teen's suicide. We realized that our response needed to be more than a one-lesson program, and that all of our congregations needed access to it.

The result is a five-lesson unit called "Crossing the Line Online" that is part of the ISJL's High School Curriculum on Contemporary Issues. The eye-opening and informative unit encourages students to be aware of the consequences of their actions and teaches that Judaism provides guidelines for living a fulfilling and moral life. The lessons focus on Internet safety, identifying and stopping cyber-bullying, avoiding *Lashon Hara* (gossip and slander), speaking up against injustice, and the Jewish concept of loving one's neighbor as oneself.

The unit is intended for a 9th/10 grade or junior high class, confirmation class, *b'nai mitzvah* group, lock-in or other youth program. In testing the lessons at congregations and Jewish summer camps, we learned that this issue resonates deeply with the students, who shared many pertinent stories.

Just as in other aspects of life, from something bad came something good. Not only are we proud of the lessons we created, but we are moved by seeing yet again how members of our community of congregations strengthen each other. Meeting the need of one congregation has produced shared wisdom for all of our schools. These lessons, as they are taught over the years, will reach thousands of students, creating more caring and accountable Jews.



## Education Conference features new sessions

The ISJL's annual "Go and Teach" Education Conference offers two-and-a-half days worth of tried and true learning opportunities for the participating religious school educators. At the ninth conference, held June 28-30, in Jackson, MS, 136 educators from our 72 communities gathered to learn pedagogic techniques from keynote speakers Rabbi Sam Joseph and Fran Pearlman, participate in small-group learning programs led by ISJL staff and guest teachers, shop at the vendor fair, compete in a rousing game of Jewish trivia and enjoy a hilarious evening of entertainment by comedian Michael "Ziggy" Danziger.

While these conference staples probably won't — and shouldn't — change any time soon, we in the Education Department like to mix things up from year to year to keep the conference fresh and exciting for our participants. This year we introduced two innovations:

- Regional receptions – Inspired by the joint education programs held twice yearly by Temple B'nai Israel in Panama City, FL, and nearby Temple Emanuel in Dothan, AL (after getting together at an ISJL Edu-

cation Conference several years ago), ISJL debuted six regional receptions. Congregations within a couple hours' driving distance from each other got acquainted and discussed ideas for collaboration. Of course, everyone munched on fabulous desserts. Our hopes and expectations were exceeded as congregations in Montgomery, AL, and Tulsa, OK, planned events that we hope will take place in the coming months.

- Issues-based wild card sessions – Each year, the Education staff tries to anticipate the pressing needs of conference participants. Should we offer sessions on parent-teacher communication? Or on oft-forgotten holidays? While these topics are important and interesting to teach, they may not always address the participating educators' concerns. This year, we asked the communities to tell us about their pressing issues. Based on responses, we presented sessions on managing congregational schools, enhancing community buy-in to the ISJL Education Curriculum and finding funding for the education program. With only nine months until the next Education Conference, we're already thinking about new themes and topics.



Photos by Tracy Pfeiffer

Fellows Alli Goldman (left) and Alex Glass speaking at a lunch session with the other Fellows at the "Go and Teach" Education Conference.

Elliot Price of Martinez, GA, and Rhonda Michel of San Antonio, TX, participating in the Arts and Crafts Minyan at the Education Conference.



# Tales from 'The Pit' and the road

By Claire Solomon, First-Year Education Fellow

I have never been to the Cabinet Room in the White House, but I imagine it has a similar energy to “the Pit,” the ISJL Education Department’s shared office space and impromptu meeting room. After our annual Education Conference in late June, the Pit really springs into action: energy bounces off of the walls, excitement and creativity abound, enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm. One would think that after a few days the Pit would settle down, but the exuberance never wanes.

That’s also the time we Fellows receive our community assignments, the religious schools that we’ll be working with during the year. For First-Year Fellows, the prospect of traveling becomes that much more real. Second-Year Fellows grin and talk animatedly about old and new friends they will meet on the road. We all are so ready to ring in the new school year.

The next few weeks fly by. Director of Education Rachel Stern and Associate Director of Education Jordan Magidson get us up to speed on the Education Curriculum and our duties. Confident Second-Years help slightly nervous First-Years prepare for the road, reminding us that we are not alone during our first visits, since Second-Years travel with First-Years in the summer. As First-Years, we spend a great deal of time writing the presentations we deliver to our communities, familiarizing ourselves with the Education Curriculum and learning about our communities. Together the Fellows revamp old programs, write new programs and receive extensive teacher training.

It’s not easy to coordinate summer visits to 72 communities in 13 states over a period of six weeks, but we do it. On those visits, we lead the teacher training sessions we have prepared, answer questions about the Education Curriculum and meet with community members whose voices



*Claire Solomon at work.*

we have only heard over the phone. We couldn’t succeed without the help of our community partners who graciously welcome us into their homes, open the synagogue doors to us, take us on excursions and introduce us to their friends and families.

Our summer visits often include bonus “tours” with other Fellows – visiting their communities and watching their teacher training sessions – so that we can

be introduced to as many congregations as possible. We come home tired after traveling thousands of miles, often for days at a time, but as soon as we get to the Pit, the energy, excitement, and enthusiasm steadily return. And just as we wave goodbye to summer, fall visits are right around the corner.

# Minyan Mission accomplished! Rabbinic Department visits 10 states in 2010

Many of us are aware that 10 was determined by the sages as the minimum number needed for communal worship. Taking this teaching to heart, the ISJL Rabbinic Department attempted something it has not done in its history: to fulfill its own sense of a *minyan*, or quorum! Not just through visiting 10 individuals... or just 10 communities.

We established a goal - in honor of the ISJL's 10th anniversary - to visit countless individuals in numerous communities in 10 separate states in the year 2010! From Texas and Oklahoma to Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky, we have been on the road and in the air, making our way to these communities in support of their valiant efforts to maintain and celebrate Jewish communal life. We thank each and every person who opened the doors of their congregations and their lives to us. It is truly a blessing! You are our heroes.





**Rabbinic Intern Jason Levine (left), Rabbi Marshal Klaven and Administrative Assistant Shirley Eriksen**

The Rabbinic Department is starting to schedule congregational visits for 2011. If your congregation is without full-time rabbinic support and would like a rabbi to conduct Sabbath/Holiday observances, lead life-cycle events, teach adult education, etc., **please don't hesitate in contacting us at (601) 362-6357 or [mklaven@isjl.org](mailto:mklaven@isjl.org).**

*On the road again*

## ISJL historians travel through Texas to research state's Jewish heritage

By Dr. Stuart Rockoff, Director, History Department

As I tacked an oversized map of Texas on my office wall a few months ago, I was struck by the sheer number of highlighted towns. I had identified 58 Jewish communities that either had a congregation or a Jewish population large enough to warrant inclusion in the ISJL's online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities. This was twice as many communities as the next biggest states in the encyclopedia, Mississippi and North Carolina, which have 28 and 26 community histories, respectively.

Tackling the Jewish history of the Lone Star State will be a daunting task, I thought. However, I wasn't starting from scratch. My first step was to look through the ISJL's filing cabinets and library. Historians Hollace Weiner, Bryan Stone, Ph.D., and Rabbi Jimmy Kessler have published tremendously insightful and useful histories of Texas Jews, while our files are filled with material I copied from the Texas Jewish Historical Society collection at the

Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. I found a great deal of information about the Jewish communities in larger cities such as Houston, Dallas and even Waco. But ISJL had accumulated little or no information about the history of Jews in smaller communities like Columbus, Palestine, and Wichita Falls. I knew, then, where to concentrate my research.

This past summer, the History Department, including Oral Historian Josh Parshall, myself and three summer interns made three research trips into southeast and northeast Texas. We visited several towns in order to unearth historical information about their Jewish communities. (Even in this digital age, many important original documents are available only on paper, and many photos remain to be digitized.) Driving into Gainesville, TX, our first stop was the local cemetery. The Jewish section was surprisingly large for a town where no Jews remained. After recording



Photos by Tracy Pfeiffer

Leon Toubin, caretaker of B'nai Abraham Synagogue in Brenham, TX, stands in front of the Ark. The synagogue was built in 1893. He and his wife, Mimi, sat for an interview with ISJL Oral Historian Josh Parshall.

all of the information from the gravestones, I dropped off intern Aaron Aruck at the local library to read old issues of the Gainesville newspaper on microfilm for information about this extinct Jewish community.

I went with my other intern, Kristin Schumacher, to the Cooke County Historical Museum. We were greeted there by Lary Kuehn, whose last name we recognized from the

Jewish cemetery. Though his family is no longer Jewish, he had recently found the original minute book of Gainesville's United Hebrew Congregation, which had been defunct since 1922, in his late father's old desk. Contained in its well preserved pages was the history of this small congregation from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a history that had largely been lost since the congregation disbanded and sold the synagogue. Lary

gave me a CD containing digital images of each page of the minute book, which we already have used in our research.

We spent the rest of the day looking through old newspapers and city directories. We met with Joe Rosenstein, who grew up in Gainesville but now lives in Dallas. His first-hand account helped us to fill in many of the blanks of the town's Jewish history from the 1930s and '40s.

Meanwhile, Josh and his intern, Tracy Pfeiffer, were conducting oral history interviews. Over two trips through Texas this summer, they filmed Jewish community members in Beaumont, Brenham, Corsicana, Dallas and Dennison.

During this past summer, the History Department also visited the Texas communities of Bay City, Bonham, Galveston, Greenville, Hempstead, Orange, Port Arthur, Sherman, Tyler and Wharton. During the next year, the History Department will crisscross Texas, gathering information and collecting oral histories to tell the full story of Jewish life in the Lone Star State.



*A local effort is attempting to preserve the former Simon Theater in downtown Brenham, which had been owned by a Jewish family.*

*This papercut Mizrach marks the eastern wall of the sanctuary at B'nai Abraham Synagogue in Brenham.*



## Humanities Texas grant to fund research in state

The ISJL History Department is pleased to have been awarded a major grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Working with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, the ISJL History Department will use the \$5000 grant to help fund research for the Texas section of the Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities. With approximately 60 community histories, the Texas section of the online encyclopedia will be the largest by far.

The grant will enable Department Director Dr. Stuart Rockoff and Oral Historian Josh Parshall to travel across Texas collecting information and stories about the many pockets of Jewish life in the Lone Star State. Working with the ISJL Education Fellows, the History Department will also develop a curriculum for Texas schools about the history of Jews in the state.

## You want Jewish culture? ISJL will bring it to you

Whether it's a musician, author, scholar or comedian your community wants, the ISJL can help you find the ideal Jewish cultural presenter. The ISJL's Cultural Programs Menu lists six presenters and a variety of programs. They are:

### *Southern States Jewish Literary Series*

- **Charles London** – The author will speak on *Far from Zion: In Search of a Global Jewish Community*, an exploration of the Jewish Diaspora, including New Orleans and Bentonville, Ark.
- **Ellen Bernstein** – Teacher, rabbinical student and founder of modern Jewish environmentalism, Ellen Bernstein wrote *Let the Earth Teach You Torah, Ecology & the Jewish Spirit* and *The Splendor of Creation*. She speaks on “The Bible’s Ecological Roots”; “What Can Judaism Offer the Environmental Movement?”; and “Ecological Understanding of Shabbat.”

### *Southern States Jewish Music Series*

- **Lil’ Rev** – The singer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and music historian offers three one-man programs that weave his singing and string instruments with narrative: “The Jews of Tin Pan Alley,” “Jews & Blues” and “‘Fiddler on the Roof’ Meets ‘O Brother, Where Art Thou.’”
- **Bert Stratton, AKA Klezmer Guy** – The two-person show “Driving Mr. Klezmer” features klezmer, Yiddish swing, Tin Pan Alley and spoken word. Bert plays clarinet and reads his comedic prose sketches accompanied by Alan Douglas on vocals and piano. They’re members of the Yiddishe Cup klezmer band.
- **Uri Barnea** – Through live music (violin, recorder and voice) and recordings, Rabbi Barnea of Hattiesburg, MS, presents an historical survey of Jewish music from ancient times to hip-hop. He has a Ph.D. in music and enjoyed a long career as conductor, composer and violinist.



### *Southern States Jewish Performance Series*

- **Michael “Ziggy” Danziger** – The comedian performs at clubs, colleges and gatherings nationwide. His Jewish-themed humor is popular with synagogue crowds. Ziggy has won Comedy Tennessee’s “Funniest Person in Memphis” competition and is the reigning “Funniest Jew in the Deep South.”

To see the full programming menu, visit the “Cultural and Art Offerings” section of the ISJL website, [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org), or contact Director of Programming Andy Muchin at [amuchin@isjl.org](mailto:amuchin@isjl.org) or (601) 362-6357.

## Author London to speak in Arkansas

The ISJL's Southern States Jewish Literary Series continues Nov. 6-7 in Arkansas with Charles London, author of *Far From Zion: In Search of a Global Jewish Community*. He'll speak Saturday, Nov. 6, at 7:30 p.m. in Bentonville's Congregation Etz Chaim and Sunday, Nov. 7, at 3 p.m. in Little Rock's Congregation Agudath Achim.



In *Far From Zion*, a 2009 National Jewish Book Award Finalist, London explores the Jewish Diaspora in some unexpected places, including Burma, Tehran, Cuba, New Orleans and Bentonville, as he searches for his own place among the Jewish people. In Bentonville, he writes about a public Chanukah candle-lighting, a Chanukah party at a bowling alley and shmoozing and worshipping at Etz Chaim.

The Southern States Jewish Literary Series is a distinguished ongoing program of presentations and book signings with leading authors of newly released works on the Jewish experience, creating a vibrant literary circuit throughout the South.

For more information on sponsoring a literary or other cultural program, contact ISJL Director of Programming Andy Muchin at [amuchin@isjl.org](mailto:amuchin@isjl.org) or (601) 362-6357.



## Summer Interns



*WE THANK THEM AND MISS THEM— The ISJL benefitted greatly from June through August from the hard work and pleasant demeanors of six summer interns. They were (from left): Mara Benenson (Community Engagement), Rob Friedman (Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience), Jason Levine (Rabbinic), Kristen Schumacher and Aaron Aruck (History) and Tracy Pfeiffer (Oral History).*

## Mississippi Public Radio to air Jewish music show

Jewish music in all of its styles – from klezmer to cantorial to Israeli rock ‘n’ roll to songs about Jews in the South – is coming to Mississippi Public Broadcasting’s Music Radio. “Sounds Jewish” will air Sundays from 3-4 pm. The show was scheduled to debut on Sept. 26.

The host and producer is Andy Muchin, who moved to Mississippi to become the ISJL’s Director of Programming. Andy co-hosted a similar show in Milwaukee, WI.

If you’re not near a radio or find yourself outside of Mississippi, you can hear a live webcast of “Sounds Jewish” by visiting [www.mpbonline.org](http://www.mpbonline.org), clicking on the “Radio” page and then on “Listen Live.”

## Save the Date

### Jewish National Fund National Conference

October 10 - 11, 2010

*Special event for Major Donors, evening of October 9th*



Intercontinental Buckhead  
Atlanta, GA

For information please contact  
[nc@jnf.org](mailto:nc@jnf.org)



Join some of the nicest people  
imaginable at

## The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Jay Mosow Memorial Delta Jewish Golf Open

*Benefitting Henry S. Jacobs Camp  
and the Goldring/Woldenberg  
Institute of Southern Jewish Life*

### Saturday, Oct. 16

Social hour – 6:30 p.m.

Dinner – 7:45 p.m.

Hebrew Union Congregation  
Greenville, MS

### Sunday, Oct. 17

Putting contest – 8:30 a.m.

Opening shofar blast – 9 a.m.

Scramble format

Greenville Country Club Golf Course

### Prizes!!

**For more information about  
entry fees, hotels or other questions, contact:**

Richard Dattel – (662) 332-7208

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## A Living Legacy for the Future

It is incredible what the ISJL has accomplished in our first 10 years. Some said we would be unable to accomplish all we set out to do. Our visions have become realities. Today we serve our 13-state region with a myriad of programs, as you have seen through the pages of CIRCA. But, we need your help to sustain these programs and ensure a bright future for those individuals we serve.

Create a lasting personal legacy at the ISJL by establishing an endowment fund in support of ISJL staff positions and programs. The following table illustrates available options. Please call Macy at (601) 362-6357 to discuss endowment giving opportunities.

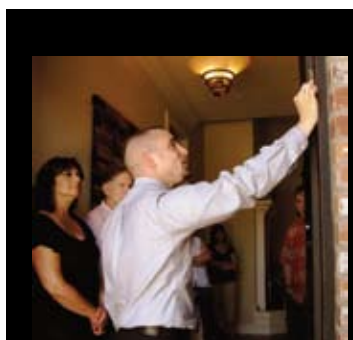
If you or a family member has been touched directly by a program that we have delivered or if you feel the responsibility that Jews support one another, no matter where they live, we ask you to support the ISJL. Every Jewish life does count!

With your support, we will continue to make a difference for the next 10 years.

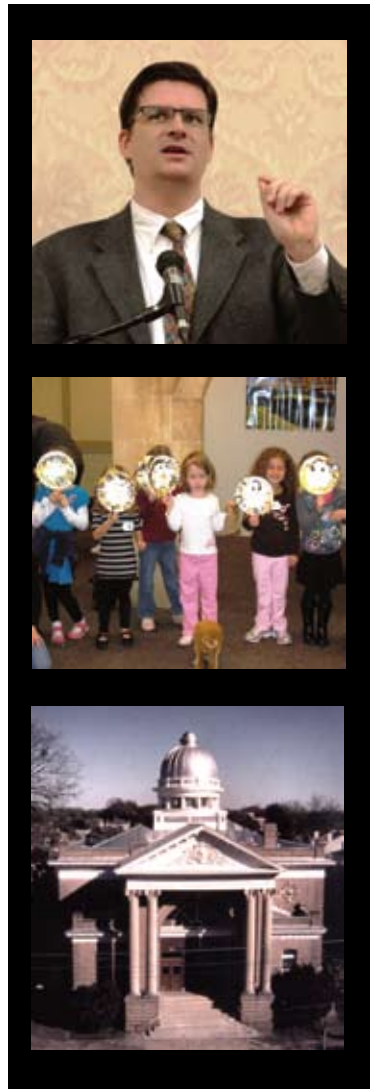
### ISJL Staff Position and Program Endowments

#### ISJL Staff Positions

Title	Number of positions	Endowment cost per position	Endowment cost total
Jewish Educator	6	<b>\$1,800,000</b>	\$10,800,000
Education Fellow	18	<b>\$700,000</b>	\$12,600,000
Rabbinic Chair	2	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	\$4,000,000
Historian	1	<b>\$1,900,000</b>	\$1,900,000
Oral Historian	1	<b>\$1,200,000</b>	\$1,200,000
Museum Coordinator	1	<b>\$1,200,000</b>	\$1,200,000
Cultural Programs Director	1	<b>\$1,400,000</b>	\$1,400,000



Title	Number of positions	Endowment cost per position	Endowment cost total
Community Engagement Director	1	<b>\$1,600,000</b>	\$1,600,000
Summer History Intern	3	<b>\$50,000</b>	\$150,000
Summer Museum Intern	1	<b>\$40,000</b>	\$40,000
Summer Community Engagement Intern	1	<b>\$50,000</b>	\$50,000
<b>ISJL Programs</b>			
Program Name	Total available	Annual Cost	Endowment cost
Literary Series	Multiple	\$50,000	<b>\$1,000,000 (per series)</b>
Jewish Cinema South	1	\$50,000	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Cemetery Trust Fund	1	\$250,000	<b>\$5,000,000</b>
<b>Other</b>			
ISJL General Unrestricted Endowment Fund		n/a	No established limit.



## The Perfect Gift: An Oral History Interview

Do you know a parent or grandparent who seems to have everything? Then commission an oral history interview for your loved one with the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life.

Commissioned oral history interviews:

- Result in edited DVDs of interview footage (video and audio) and, optionally, bound interview transcripts.
- Are conducted by a skilled interviewer with a strong background in Southern Jewish culture and history.
- Take advantage of extensive pre-interview research.
- Preserve your loved one's story in his or her own words.
- Provide unique and rewarding opportunities for interviewees to reflect on their experiences and achievements.
- Support our History Department's documentation of the Jewish experience in the American South.



For more information about fees and availability, please contact Josh Parshall at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life by email ([jparshall@isjl.org](mailto:jparshall@isjl.org)) or telephone (601-362-6357).

# The Peddler's Cart

The ultimate Southern Jewish shopping experience!

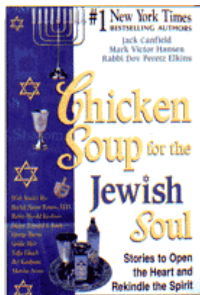
## Southern Cooking Special— Was \$60, now \$45!

Add a little Southern Jewish spice to your kitchen with a gift set of Marcie Cohen Ferris' [Matzoh Ball Gumbo](#) cookbook, a *Shalom Y'all* apron and a box of Star of David Cookie Cutters. Start cooking those bagels and grits today! Set will be gift-wrapped if requested; please ask about pricing.



## Peddler's Cart Book Clearance Sale

For all items including new and sale items, check our website, [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org). Quantities are limited, so order now!



[Chicken Soup for the Jewish Soul](#), edited by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins. These 86 stories deal with the themes of life, being Jewish, love, kindness, humanity and family. **Was \$12, now \$9!**

[GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation](#) by Deborah Dash Moore. This book follows the lives of 15 young Jewish men as they faced the demands of military service. **Was \$26, now \$20!**

[Glass Hearts](#) by Terri Paul. This novel traces the lives of a Hungarian Jewish family during and after World War II. **Was \$25, now \$20!**

[The Jewish Confederates](#) by Robert N. Rosen. In his latest study, Rosen introduces readers to the community of Southern Jews in the 1860s. **Was \$40, now \$30!**

[Sol's Story](#) by Richard Chardkoff. The biography of a Holocaust survivor who settled in Monroe, LA, and became a successful businessman. **Was \$25, now \$20!**

[Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, the Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana](#) by Lawrence N. Powell. The story of a Holocaust survivor's successful mission to defeat Duke in his bid to become Louisiana governor in 1991. **Was \$35, now \$25!**



[Landsman](#) by Peter Charles Melman. This novel is the Civil War story of Elia Abrams, orphan son of an indentured Jewish immigrant. Abrams flees his New Orleans gangland home to enlist with the Third Louisiana infantry. **Was \$25, now \$20!**

[Kabbalah: A Love Story](#) by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner. **Was \$12, now \$10!**

[Heart of a Wife: The Diary of a Southern Jewish Woman](#) by Helen Jacobus Apte. **Was \$18, now \$15!**

**Your purchase supports the ISJL's work!  
Visit the Peddlers Cart online at [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org)  
Ordering is a simple click away**

## Thank You to Our Contributors!

*In these CIRCA pages, you can see the impact our education, history, museum, cultural and rabbinic programs have on thousands of people just like you. With deep appreciation, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life extends thanks to everyone who made a contribution from January 1, 2010–Aug. 1, 2010, to enable our important work.*

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Rabbi Neil Sandler receiving  
his Ph.D.  
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Muriel Turner's recovery  
Reva & Ellis Hart

# GOT *HOMETOWN* PRIDE?

**Then how about a little friendly competition?** Please let us know where you grew up! We will officially announce the community from which we heard **the most responses by Nov. 1, 2010**. Your response will help our History Department track the demographic changes that have transformed the Jewish South and preserve the legacy of congregations and communities that have disappeared.

Please visit our website – [www.ISJL.org](http://www.ISJL.org) – and click on the **Hometown Pride** tab to complete the brief questionnaire.

We will ask for:

- Your name
- Current address
- E-mail address
- Phone numbers
- Spouse's or significant other's name
- Childhood hometown
- Parents' childhood hometown(s) & family name(s)
- Spouse's or significant other's childhood hometown & family name:
- Where do your children live, currently?
- Would you or another family member be willing to share more information about the Jewish community in which you were raised?
- Do you have any photographs/artifacts of your Jewish childhood to share with the History Department?
- Which other members of your Jewish childhood community could enhance the documentation of Jewish life in your hometown?



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